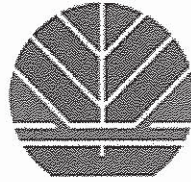


WASHINGTON STATE  
Geographic Name Application



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
**Natural Resources**

Proposed Name: Sq'emenen Bay

County: San Juan

Township: \_\_\_\_\_ Range: \_\_\_\_\_ Section(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Lat. 48.56038° N, Long. 122.94685° W (Begin)

Lat. \_\_\_\_\_ N, Long. \_\_\_\_\_ W (End)

☐ New Name

☒ Controversial Name

☒ Name Change

☐ Location Clarification

☐ Spelling Clarification

## Description

Type of feature (lake, stream, etc.): Bay

Description of feature (location, length, depth, height, size and/or area covered): The bay is located on Southcentral Shaw Island. It is bounded by South Beach County Park to the east, Upright Channel to the south, and Cedar Rock Preserve to the west.

If a stream, number of months it flows on a yearly basis: N/A

Is this feature identified by other names or spellings? Please list variant names: Squaw Bay

Has it ever been signed, posted, or publicized? If so, when? The bay is currently known as Squaw Bay.

## History

Please provide a brief history of the feature and its immediate surroundings, this might include information on the following: 1 Native American; 2 First settlers; 3 Historical background pertinent to feature; 4 History on how the land is/was used; 5 Natural disasters (floods, fires, etc.) 6 Any significant cultural events. If appropriate, geology, flora and fauna. Cite sources. Use additional pages if needed.

Origin of name: see attached letter.

If a commemorative name, provide a brief summary of the ENTIRE life of the person including how and the length of time he/she was associated with the proposed feature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Justification of Proposed Name

What is the usage of feature?

The bay is an important area for migratory and wintering waterfowl, herons, shorebirds, and marine life. The bay is also a reefnet fishing area.

Please state why the proposed name will best serve the public interest:

Sqiemenen is the Lummi name for Shaw Island. "Squaw" is widely viewed as a racially offensive, undescending term. It has historically been used in a way that implies Native American women are

How long has the proposed name been in use? By whom?

second class citizens or exotic objects.  
✓ Since the late 1800s, by post-treaty era settlers.

Please list all sources of information used for your research: (maps, books, articles, periodicals, etc. for background history relating to proposed name)

See attached letter.

What type of support is there for the proposed name?

List all groups and persons who are familiar with the proposed feature and its usage. Please provide names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses and his/her association with knowledge of the geographic feature:

See attached letter.



## Justification of Proposed Name

What is the usage of feature? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please state why the proposed name will best serve the public interest: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How long has the proposed name been in use? By whom? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

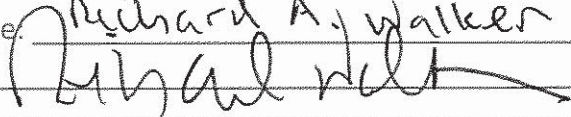
Please list all sources of information used for your research: (maps, books, articles, periodicals, etc. for background history relating to proposed name) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What type of support is there for the proposed name?

List all groups and persons who are familiar with the proposed feature and its usage. Please provide names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses and his/her association with knowledge of the geographic feature:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Application submitted by:

Name:	Richard A. Walker		
Address:	PO Box 1974	City:	Poulsbo
		State:	WA
		Zip:	98370
Phone #:	360-779-2903	Email:	richardmollywalker@gmail.com
		Date of Application:	8/25/16
I am aware that all information submitted is considered to be public information.			
Printed Name:	Richard A. Walker		
Signature:			Date:
			8/25/16

Please mail completed form along with copies of any additional materials to:

**WA State Board on Geographic Names**

**PO Box 47030**

**Olympia, WA 98504-7030**

(Phone: 360-902-1280 - Fax: 360-902-1778 - Email: [bogn@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:bogn@dnr.wa.gov))

AUG 25 2015

ENGINEERING DIVISION  
OLYMPIA 09504-7030

Aug. 23, 2015

Washington State Committee on Geographic Names  
P.O. Box 47030  
Olympia, WA 98504-7030

Dear honorable committee members,

My name is Richard Walker, a former editor of The Journal of the San Juan Islands (1999-2011), a former nine-year member of the San Juan Historical Museum Board of Trustees (2001-10), and author of a local history book, "Roche Harbor."

I am a U.S. citizen of indigenous ancestry (Yaqui), and my wife, a retired middle school teacher, is a citizen of the Samish Indian Nation, one of the First Peoples of the San Juans.

I ask the committee to change the name of Squaw Bay, on Shaw Island in San Juan County, to Sq'emenen Bay.

While linguists still debate the etymology of the word "squaw," these are established facts:

**The word is widely viewed as offensive.** The word is a Colonial-era corruption of an Algonquian word. Over time, it came to be used in a demeaning way – as a term of condescension, as a racialized epithet, and in a way that implies Native American women are second-class citizens or exotic objects.

Chicago Sun-Times columnist Cecil Adams wrote in 2000, "... the protesters have a point when they say special terms for minority women are inherently demeaning. Think about it. Negress. Jewess. Sixty years ago these terms were in common use. Now they make your flesh creep. Next picture some pot-bellied slob in a cowboy hat: 'Why, if it ain't a injun and his squaw.'"

**The word has no relevance in the San Juan Islands.** In the article, "Squaw: Offensive or not?" (Jan. 31, 2014, Indian Country Today), Dr. Marge Bruchac, an Abenaki historical consultant, told reporter Vincent Schilling that "esqua," "squa" "skwa" are suffixes of larger words with significant meanings. She said traditional speakers "still say words like 'nidobaskwa' = a female friend, 'manigebeskwā' = woman of the woods ... When Abenaki people sing the Birth Song, they address 'nuncksquassis' = 'little woman baby'."

However, Ives Goddard, curator and senior linguist in the National Museum of Natural History's Department of Anthropology, also writes that the Mohawk word "ojiskwa" translates "politely" to "vagina."

A debate on the word's etymology and whether the word used by newcomers to the Pacific Northwest was derived from the Algonquian or Mohawk suffix is unnecessary here. It's clear this word has no relevance in the San Juan Islands. If it is being used as



a reference to the indigenous women of the San Juan Islands, well, it proves the points made earlier in this letter about it being used in an offensive, derogatory and demeaning manner.

**Sq'emenen is a historical place name.** According to Lummi Nation hereditary chief Bill (Tsilixw) James, a respected teacher and culture-bearer, the Lummi name for Shaw Island is Sq'emenen. It is the name by which the First People of the San Juan Islands have always known the island, and it is the name by which they know it now.

A 2010 cultural survey by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife ([http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/2010/10013\\_cultural.pdf](http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/2010/10013_cultural.pdf)) states that the islands' First Peoples established place names indicating the foods found there. According to the report:

"Thus in the Lummi language Waldron Island was 'the place of deepwater fishing.' Patos was 'where the native oyster is found.' Sucia was 'mussels on the rocks.' Matia was Pun nawhing, an edible bulb. Shaw was Somemana, an oily little fish."

Chief Tsilixw said he doesn't know where the name "Somemana" came from. It is possible that "Sq'emenen" came to be pronounced "Somemana" by newcomers to the islands.

**There is precedence for the change.** Other governments in the United States have changed place names that contain the word "squaw." Among them:

1999: the Montana Legislature created an advisory group to replace the word "squaw" in local place names and required any replacement of a sign to bear the new name.

2000: The Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission and the Maine Legislature collaborated to pass a law eliminating the words "squaw" and "squa" from all of the state's waterways, islands, and mountains. Some of those sites have been renamed with the word "moose"; others, in a nod to Wabanaki language-recovery efforts, are now being given new place-appropriate names in the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy languages.

2003: Squaw Peak in Phoenix, Arizona, was renamed Piestewa Peak to honor the Iraq War casualty Pfc. Lori Piestewa, the first Native American woman to die in combat for the U.S.

2006: Citizens of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe called for the removal of the word "squaw" from the names of 13 locations in Idaho.

2011: The California Office of Historic Preservation changed the name of a state historical landmark, "Squaw Rock," in the Russian River canyon, to "Frog Woman Rock," to honor and respect the cultural heritage of the Pomo peoples of the region.

2015: The Buffalo, New York, Common Council change the name of "Squaw Island" to "Unity Island," after being petitioned by citizens of the Seneca Nation of New York.

I am joined in this request by my wife, Molly Neely-Walker, a citizen of the Samish Indian Nation; and the Hon. Deborah Parker, Tulalip Tribes council member and great-great-great-granddaughter of She-Kla-Malt of WH'LEHL-kluh, the village site later known as the Pearl Little Estate, overlooking Speiden Channel.

**My sources include:**

San Juan Archipelago Biological Preserves, Cedar Rock Preserve description, University of Washington (Claudia E. Mills),  
<http://faculty.washington.edu/cemills/UWSanJuanPreserves.html>.

"Management Plan for the University of Washington's Cedar Park Reserve on Shaw Island, San Juan County, Washington," Oct. 28, 2008, Claudia E. Mills,  
<http://faculty.washington.edu/cemills/CedarRockManagementPlan.pdf>

"Mom's Marsh Conservation Easement," San Juan Preservation Trust,  
<http://sjpt.org/places-projects/preserves-easement/easements/moms-marsh-conservation-easement/>

"A special place in history," Sharron Wooten, The Journal of the San Juan Islands,  
<http://www.co.san-juan.wa.us/parks/pdfs/shawparkhistory-wootton.pdf>

"The Salmon Bank: An Ethnological Compilation," Jacilee Wray, National Park Service, March 21, 2003, [http://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online\\_books/sajh/salmon\\_bank.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/sajh/salmon_bank.pdf)

Lummi Chief Tsilixw James, personal correspondence, Aug. 5, 2015.

**Supporters of this request include:**

Jaadkaagwia Allen (Tsimshian), former Indian Child Welfare coordinator, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe.

Sophie Bailey (Swinomish), member, Swinomish Tribe Senate.

Marilee Bittner-Fawcett (Tsimshian), former public information officer, South Puget Intertribal Planning Agency.

Gil Calac (Paiute), Vietnam War veterans advocate, Yakama.

Laurie Cepa (She-Kla-Malt descendant), real estate broker, Everett.

Leonard Dixon (Lummi), owner, Coast Salish Remediation Services.

Leslie Eastwood (Samish), general manager, Samish Indian Nation.

April James (Swinomish), shelter manager, Swinomish Tribe.

Cheryl Johnson (Lummi), Lummi Indian Business Council.



Donna Jones (Port Gamble S'Klallam), retired chemical dependency professional, Kingston.

Carrie Kaeding (Samish), career coach, Marysville.

Vernell Lane (Lummi), fundraising and strategic planning consultant, Lummi.

Laurie Mattson, former executive director, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, Brinnon.

Deborah Parker, council member, Tulalip Tribes.

Patricia Paul (Inupiaq), lawyer and appellate court judge, Swinomish.

Mary Ann Peltier (Chippewa/Assiniboine Sioux), co-chairwoman, Urban Native Education Alliance, Seattle.

Frank Penter (Samish), retired U.S. Navy chief petty officer, Gold Bar.

Joseph Price (Port Gamble S'Klallam/Navajo), youth services specialist, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe.

Laura Price (Port Gamble S'Klallam), Healing of the Canoe program coordinator, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe.

Steve Robinson, former policy analyst, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, Seattle.

Randy Scott (Quinault), council member, City of Ocean Shores.

Theresa Sheldon (Tulalip), council member, Tulalip Tribes.

Robin Little Wing Sigo (Suquamish), council member, Suquamish Tribe.

Kelly Sullivan (Port Gamble S'Klallam), executive director, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe.

Victoria Tom (Port Gamble S'Klallam), fisheries department, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe.

Molly Neely-Walker (Samish), retired public school teacher, Poulsbo.

Marilyn Wandrey (Suquamish), former program administrator, Region 5, Washington State Indian Policy.

Lisa Weber, former council member, Samish Indian Nation;

Candace Wellman, independent historian and writer, former research assistant at the Washington State Archives, Bellingham.

I thank you for your consideration and look forward to appearing before the committee on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Walker", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Richard Walker  
P.O. Box 1974  
Poulsbo, WA. 98370  
richardmollywalker@gmail.com  
360-779-2903 (home)  
360-813-2916 (cell)



**Comments**

**Received**

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WASHINGTON STATE COMMITTEE ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES

P.O.Box 47030, Olympia WA 98504-7030

Fax (360) 902-1778

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Please comment on the following name proposal. Attached you'll find the information regarding this proposed name that will assist you in your comments. If needed, attach additional sheets or information. *Note: The proposed name is not yet official and should not be published on any official documents.*

**Proposed Name:** Sq'emenen Bay

**County:** San Juan

☐ I'm in favor of this proposal    ☐ I oppose this proposal    ☒ I have no objection to proposal

**Comments, Please explain:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Please sign and return the completed comment sheet to the Washington State Committee on Geographic Names by **May 10, 2016**.

Tara Wallace  
Signature

2/22/16  
Date

(301) 713-2737 x123  
Telephone Number

TARA WALLACE  
Printed Name

TARA.WALLACE@NOAA.GOV  
Email

Representing: NOAA, MARINE CHART DIVISION

*It is important to make copies and keep originals of referenced material, historical documentation, articles, and other information relating to the above names.*



**From:** [Sean Crane](#)  
**To:** [DNR RE BOGN](#)  
**Cc:** [Maurice John](#)  
**Subject:** Sq'emenen Bay Name Change  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 13, 2015 3:14:08 PM

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Submitted on behalf of Seneca Nation of Indians President Maurice A. John, Sr., who wishes to offer the following public comment on a geographic name proposal for a San Juan County Name Change:

October 13, 2015

Washington State Committee on Geographic Names  
Post Office Box 47030  
Olympia, Washington 98504-7030

RE: Name Change to Sq'emenen Bay

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of the leadership of the Seneca Nation, I would like to voice our support for the proposal to change the name of the bay on Shaw Island to "Sq'emenen Bay." Sq'emenen is the traditional Lummi name for Shaw Island. Recently, the Seneca people succeeded in our quest to have an offensive name dropped as the place name for an island located in the Niagara River outside Buffalo, New York. The new name for this island is "Ga'nigö:i:yoh" in Seneca which translates to "Unity Island" in English. Our people were encouraged by this name change and we have vowed to ask other communities to change their use of disparaging names that stereotype or are derogatory toward native peoples. We believe that people everywhere deserve dignity and respect—whether on an island in the Niagara River in Western New York or in a bay in the San Juan Islands off the coast of Washington. Thank you for your consideration.

Nya:wëh (Thank you),

Maurice A. John, Sr.  
President



Sean Crane  
Assistant to the President  
[sean.crane@sni.org](mailto:sean.crane@sni.org)  
(716) 945-1790 ext. 3077

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[www.sni.org](http://www.sni.org)



**From:** [matt remle](#)  
**To:** [DNR RE BOGN](#); [council@sanjuanico.com](mailto:council@sanjuanico.com)  
**Subject:** Change the name of Squaw Bay to Sq'emenen Bay  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 26, 2015 8:35:36 AM

---

Hello

I just wanted to add my voice of support to change the name of Squaw Bay to Sq'emenen Bay. As you most likely are aware, Squaw is a derogatory term for Native American women. According to Chief Tsilixw James, Sq'emenen is the Lummi name for Shaw Island. This would be a great way to end a derogatory term and replace it with one that honors the original name of the area.

Thank you for your time

Matt Remle

From: [Rick Hughes](#)  
To: [matt remle](#)  
Cc: [DNR RE BOGN](#)  
Subject: Re: Change the name of Squaw Bay to Sq'emenen Bay  
Date: Wednesday, August 26, 2015 8:44:23 AM

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Matt:

Thank you for your email and request. I will take your thoughts into consideration.

I appreciate your time.

Best regards,

Rick Hughes  
San Juan County Council  
District #2  
[Rickh@sanjuanco.com](mailto:Rickh@sanjuanco.com)  
360-472-0253

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 26, 2015, at 8:40 AM, matt remle <[mcremle@hotmail.com](mailto:mcremle@hotmail.com)> wrote:

Hello

I just wanted to add my voice of support to change the name of Squaw Bay to Sq'emenen Bay. As you most likely are aware, Squaw is a derogatory term for Native American women. According to Chief Tsilixw James, Sq'emenen is the Lummi name for Shaw Island. This would be a great way to end a derogatory term and replace it with one that honors the original name of the area.

Thank you for your time

Matt Remle



**From:** [Carol Poliak](#)  
**To:** [DNR RE BOGN](#)  
**Cc:** [marapoliak@gmail.com](mailto:marapoliak@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Shaw Island name change  
**Date:** Monday, September 07, 2015 4:53:06 PM

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I wish to speak in strong support of a name change which is coming before you for initial consideration on October 23. I am a resident of Shaw Island and have long felt that the name Squaw Bay is a real embarrassment and should be changed. I am delighted that this is moving forward.

I understand that there is much controversy about the true meaning of the word "Squaw", and its derivation. I do not believe that we need to (or even can) get to the bottom of the derivation of the word "Squaw"; we only need to know that it is considered to be derogatory by many Native Americans. If the very people who are being referred to as "Squaw" find that term offensive, then it needs to change. At the very best (with many worse possible derivations), it may be an Algonquian word for "woman". This is certainly not a local term.

Exactly what the name is changed to is not as important an issue as that the name be changed to a non-offensive word.

That being said, I see the proposed name of Sq'emenem to be eminently pronounceable. Try saying it out loud. I am certainly willing to be trained to say it correctly. I think it would be a wonderful educational opportunity for the school kids and all the rest of us to learn more about the Salish language, history on Shaw prior to non-native settlement, etcetera. I strongly hope that we as an island can embrace this opportunity.

Please let me know what I can do to further support this name change.

Thank you so much.

Sincerely,

Carol Poliak

From: [Mara Poliak](#)  
To: [DNR RE BOGN](#)  
Subject: Squaw Bay, Shaw Island, name change  
Date: Thursday, September 10, 2015 5:21:32 PM

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Hello,

I am writing in support of the name change that is coming up for review on October 23rd. My family has owned property on Shaw Island since before I was born, and I have spent much of my life there. Ever since becoming aware of the derogatory nature of the word Squaw, I have felt very ashamed and upset by Shaw Island's Squaw Bay. If the people who the term refers to find it offensive, that is more than enough reason to change it. There is certainly a precedent of others enacting this same change throughout the United States.

The most pressing issue is to change the name, however I am in support of the proposed change to Sq'emenem. In the initial proposal, this name was endorsed by many people of Native American heritage, and I would be very pleased if we chose to honor that. Sq'emenem is also the Lummi name for Shaw Island. If we chose to refer to the Bay by this name, I think it would inspire us to think more about the history of Shaw, and the people who were here before we were.

Thank you for your consideration, I am thrilled that this is moving forward.

Sincerely,  
Mara Poliak

--

[mountainmountainmountain.tumblr.com](http://mountainmountainmountain.tumblr.com)

**From:** [Morris, Rep. Jeff](#)  
**To:** [DNR RE BOGN](#)  
**Cc:** [Lytton, Kristine](#); [West, Meagan](#); [O'Farrell, Kim](#)  
**Subject:** Proposal to change the name of Squaw Bay to Sq'emenen Bay  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 09, 2015 3:18:20 PM

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Dear Washington State Committee on Geographic Names,

I fully support The proposal to change the name of Squaw Bay to Sq'emenen Bay -- the Lummi name for Shaw Island. The word "squaw" is widely viewed as being offensive and has no relevance in the San Juan Islands. The name Sq'emenen is a more authentic and appropriate name and honors the Lummi Tribe and the history of Shaw Island and the surrounding San Juan archipelago.

Your consideration is greatly appreciated.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Morris", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Representative Jeff Morris  
40<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



From: [Carole Davis](#)  
To: [DNR RE BOGN](#)  
Cc: [council@sanjuanico.com](mailto:council@sanjuanico.com)  
Subject: Renaming Squaw Bay on Shaw Island  
Date: Monday, September 14, 2015 12:31:57 PM

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*It's taken awhile to formulate my thoughts, but I now strongly hope that the Shaw community will support a name change for Squaw Bay.*

*Because of the way the proposal was presented to islanders, I admit getting caught up in research to figure out the meaning of the word "squaw"—only to realize, as even the instigators of the proposal conclude, that the derivation of the word is irrelevant. **What IS relevant is that at present, the majority of indigenous North Americans consider nearly all uses of the term "squaw" to be a form of ethnic slur.***

*There is a nationwide movement to change squaw names and six states have passed legislation to require or encourage deleting the word from place names. This proposal for Squaw Bay has not only the support of our representative Jeff Morris, but was co-signed by more than thirty members of the, among others, Samish, Tulalip, S'Klallam, Swinomish and Lummi peoples. This is enough for me!*

*As to what the new name should be, I have no strong feelings. I like the name Reefnetter Bay. But I really think that having a native American name would be wonderful. We have no such names on Shaw honoring the first users of our island and a Native American name seems much more relevant than naming our island after a naval officer who never even set foot in the San Juans.*

*I personally do not find the name Sq'ememenem to be difficult to pronounce, although I will probably be challenged by a "full glottal stop." But wouldn't it be fun to have a workshop on glottal stops so that those locals in the know could feel superior? As for the rest of the world, they could as easily learn to say Skwem-en-em as Puyallip, Deschutes, Kalalach, Ohanapecosh, Pend Oreille and Suiattle.*

*I would also support the Lummi word for the bark used for reefnet fishing (Shwalu - not sure how it is spelled). Or I wonder if anyone knows the indigenous name of the Native American woman who once lived near the bay.*

*In conclusion, I don't think that the new name is as important as our resolve to change it. Like the confederate flag in the South, the name Squaw Bay may be part of our history, but I see no valid reason to continue pouring salt on old and current wounds.*

*Sincerely,*

*Carole Davis  
long time Shaw Island resident*

September 14, 2015

To: WA State Committee on Geographic Names  
Re: Squaw Bay / Sq'emenen Bay (San Juan County)

I am a professional anthropologist specializing in traditional societies of Native North America, and served on the U of Washington faculty for 33 years (I am now retired). I have been a part-time resident of Shaw Island since 1981.

I strongly support changing the name to *something* other than Squaw Bay. The term "squaw" is widely perceived as derogatory, offensive, and a relic of a racist and ethnocentric past that we should not memorialize on our maps, street names, and in daily speech. That does not mean that most people who use the term mean to be derogatory; I think most are just unaware of how offensive it is to many (perhaps most) Native Americans.

As the proposal from Richard Walker et al. notes, there are various possible derivations of "squaw," but whatever its derivation, "squaw" is an offensive term. The etymology (historical derivation) of the word might be interesting or relevant to some, but it can hardly be crucial. The term is derogatory because of a long history of its use in denigrating Indian women, as detailed in various sources. If "squaw" originally meant "beautiful woman" or "wife" in some Native American language, it would not change this fact. To argue otherwise is like claiming that the "N word" is not derogatory because it's derived from the Spanish or Portuguese word for "black", or (to use a somewhat less loaded analogy) that "pickaninny" is not derogatory because it derives from "pequeninho" (Portuguese for "small child"). Language changes over time in a social context, and what a word meant a century or even a couple of decades ago is no sure guide to its current meaning.

I do not have a strong opinion about the suitability of the proposed new name, "Sq'emenem Bay" (though I don't agree with comments I have heard that it's "impossible" to pronounce – following the initial consonants, just say "M-n-M"). I do agree with concerns raised by some Shaw Islanders that a name that might be mispronounced by some, and difficult to spell, could create problems in emergency situations (9-1-1 calls, for example). That said, it strikes me that there are actually very few Indian names in the San Juans, and virtually none on Shaw, whereas lots of places are named after military figures, many of whom never even visited the islands (including John Shaw, naval officer in the War of 1812). Thus, I would very much like to see a local Coast Salish name chosen. Given the proximity of the bay in question to the main reef-netting site on Shaw, the Straits Salish term for inner willow bark employed in reef-nets, also used as a metonym for the whole reef-net gear, might be ideal (two syllables, easy to pronounce; phonetically anglicized to *Shwalu* or the like).<sup>\*</sup> Whatever name is adopted, there is no good reason for keeping an offensive, implicitly racist name for one of the most beautiful bays in the San Juan Islands.

**Eric Alden Smith**  
PO Box 815  
Shaw Island, WA 98286  
Professor Emeritus  
Dept. of Anthropology, Univ. of Washington

<sup>\*</sup>Ciensi. Andrew and Bill White, "Sxwalu (Reefnet) Fishing", available at [www.esquimaltnation.ca/resources/Reef%20nets.pdf](http://www.esquimaltnation.ca/resources/Reef%20nets.pdf)

Claxton, Nick (2003) "The Douglas Treaty and WSÁNEC traditional fisheries: A model for Saanich Peoples Governance," unpublished MA thesis, U of Victoria.

**From:** [Liz Illg](#)  
**To:** [DNR RE BOGN](#)  
**Subject:** Sq'emenen Bay, San Juan County  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 15, 2015 10:38:34 AM

---

September 15, 2015

Washington State Committee on Geographic Names  
PO Box 47030  
Olympia, WA 98504-7030

Dear Committee Members:

I support the name change proposed by Richard Walker for Squaw Bay on Shaw Island to Sq'emenen Bay. As a lifelong islands visitor and property owner on San Juan Island since 1995 I embrace the opportunity to endorse this change for two major reasons.

First, the term "squaw" is colloquially offensive and is being removed from geographical sites around the country. Second, Sq'emenen is the traditional name for Shaw Island and is in current use by local tribes.

I urge your consideration to bring this place name into congruence with contemporary values regarding women and language, and to honor the historical significance of a name used by indigenous groups for untold millennia.

Sincerely,

Liz Illg  
PO Box 1258  
Friday Harbor, WA 98250



**From:** [Alex MacLeod](#)  
**To:** [DNR RE BOGN](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed Name Change for Squaw Bay  
**Date:** Friday, October 09, 2015 1:23:24 PM

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Oct. 9, 2015

Washington State Committee on Geographic Names  
Box 47030  
Olympia, WA 98504-7030

Re: Proposed name change: Squaw Bay, Shaw Island

Dear Committee Members:

Residents of Shaw Island learned about a month ago that an application had been filed to change the name of Squaw Bay, on the south shore of the island, to Sq'emenem Bay. The application had been filed by individuals with no connection to Shaw, nor had any islanders been contacted before or after the application had been filed.

As chair of the Board of Trustees of the Shaw Island Library & Historical Society, I initiated a series of discussions among islanders about the proposal. That included a meeting Sept. 19 attended by 23 island residents and email responses from nearly 30 others. This is on an island with a full-time population of about 200. You can find the background on these discussions at [www.shawislandlibrary.org/renaming-squaw-bay-discussion](http://www.shawislandlibrary.org/renaming-squaw-bay-discussion)

As you might expect, there wasn't unanimous agreement in support of the proposed change. Some (more than one-quarter) feel the name, which has been on the bay (and adjacent road) for more than 100 years, is part of the island's history and local usage and should remain unchanged. Some question the validity of the assertion that the word is offensive to most Native Americans. Some simply object to outsiders seeking to impose their judgment on Shaw.

The majority viewpoint, however, is as follows:

- That we indicate support for changing the name.
- That we **do not** support the proposed change to Sq'emenem Bay.
- That we work with the applicant to try to reach agreement on a replacement name that more closely reflects both the native and non-native history of that particular bay.

With this in mind, it would seem appropriate for the committee to defer until its May meeting any action on the proposal.

Sincerely,

Alex MacLeod

**From:** [Alex MacLeod](#)  
**To:** [Richard Walker](#)  
**Cc:** [DNR RE BOGN](#)  
**Subject:** Re: About your letter to the state committee  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 13, 2015 7:53:15 AM

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Richard:

Since your note is copied to the committee, I feel it needs a response.

The Shaw community, as our letter makes clear, **supports** your application to change the name of the bay. It says nothing about your beliefs about the derivation or true meaning of the word "squaw." In your response, you are arguing a point that, as our position makes clear, is not at issue.

Further, in our letter to the committee we have reached out to you and your supporters to work together to find a name we all find appropriate. Your response raises questions about whether you are willing to participate in such an effort, and may be reason enough for the committee to reject, rather than simply defer, your application. Since we all wish to change the name of the bay, that would be a shame, but there should be some indication that a meaningful collaboration is possible for the committee to defer rather than reject your application. Your note and the fact that you made this proposal without any contact with the Shaw community, is not a positive sign.

Respectfully,

Alex MacLeod

On Oct 12, 2015, at 7:46 PM, Richard Walker <[richardmollywalker@gmail.com](mailto:richardmollywalker@gmail.com)> wrote:

Alex,

While I have not resided on Shaw Island, I have had a home on San Juan Island -- like Shaw, a part of the San Juan archipelago -- since 1999. My wife, who is a citizen of the Samish Indian Nation, comes from an islands lineage that dates back thousands of years. Our home is located due south of proposed Sq'emenen Bay, near a Samish village site, at Cape San Juan.

Contrary to your letter, I don't believe the word "squaw" is a racialized epithet. I believe it is a misappropriated word that has been misused as a racialized epithet.

Anthropologist Dr. Margaret Bruchac, Abenaki, whose 1999 essay has been quoted by opponents of the name "Sq'emenen Bay" ("Reclaiming 'squaw' in the name of the ancestors"), also wrote in her essay, "During the late 19th century, Algonkian words that had come into common usage among Americans were carried west, by French fur traders and other whites ... During westward expansion, 'chief,' 'brave,' 'papoose,' and 'squaw' took on negative connotations as they were increasingly used as generic descriptions and epithets. The misuse of 'squaw' was further spread by early 20th century movies and children's books that depicted stereotypes and 'savage Indians.' "

Of place names, she wrote in the same essay, "Every river, mountain, valley, and plain, every plant and every animal, every living being on this continent was known to the original inhabitants ... If the real goal is [to] preserve that history, then the solution is easy -- encourage the local Native Nations to rename these places in their original languages ..."

She added, "I feel we would do best to argue for revision of place names in the name of historical accuracy, tribal sovereignty, and basic respect, since 'squaw' is neither historically nor linguistically appropriate as a universal term to apply to Native women ... We can claim the opportunity to recover original indigenous place names, reinforce respect for local indigenous histories, and support Native language reclamation efforts."

She concluded, "When I hear all the words of our old languages spoken by Native peoples, in their proper contexts, I hear the voices of the ancestors. ... In their honor I demand that our language, our women, and our history, be treated with respect."

Sq'emenen, the Lummi name for Shaw Island, is an original indigenous place name, reinforces respect for local indigenous histories, and supports Native language reclamation efforts.

Richard Walker  
Poulsbo, Washington



**From:** [Jon Shannon](#)  
**To:** [DNR RE BOGN](#)  
**Subject:** Squaw Bay  
**Date:** Friday, October 09, 2015 8:10:00 PM

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Dear sir: I would like the name Squaw Bay to remain the official place name of the Bay located on the southeast shore of Shaw Island. Naming a place something offensive to someone somewhere is not the same as calling someone who might be offended by that name.

Thank you.

Jon Shannon

Shaw Island resident for 16 years.

**From:** [inga horton](#)  
**To:** [DNR RE BOGN](#)  
**Subject:** Squaw Bay  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 29, 2015 5:17:59 PM

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I think that it is somewhat perilous to change an accepted name, the history of the name will be lost forever. Squaw Bay just rolls off the tongue, Reefnet Bay does not! I am hoping that Squaw Bay will be retained forever. Inga Horton, Horton's Hook.

**From:** [Paul D. Carey](#)  
**To:** [DNR RE BOGN](#)  
**Subject:** Squaw Bay  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 30, 2015 6:48:29 PM

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Seems to me that the movement to rename Squaw bay to a barely pronounceable alternative is laughable on its face, not to mention confusing, a waste of time and money (for new signage, new maps, etc, etc), and would not (according to some notable authorities) even be politically correct.

Paul Carey

From: [Careyjr@aol.com](mailto:Careyjr@aol.com)  
To: [DNR RE BOGN](#)  
Subject: (no subject)  
Date: Friday, October 02, 2015 11:24:37 AM

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I strongly disagree with Mr Morris's recommendation to change the name of Squaw Bay. I would ask that the committee not take the "politically correct" approach to this issue. Please research the origin of the name. Do not poll the white citizens of the community. Speak with the tribal elders and historians. Review the extensive research others have done regarding the local native american language, and the meaning of the word in their culture. Native americans have not put a negative connotation on the word, its the white man. If you want to honor native american culture leave it alone. Research has shown that the word simply means women or young girl. What the heck is wrong with that. Please do your research and not fold to the "political correctness" campaign.

Jeff Carey  
[Careyjr@aol.com](mailto:Careyjr@aol.com)



# SQ'EMENEN BAY - SAN JUAN COUNTY

*Shaw Island*

Sq'ememen Bay

*Indian Cove*

*Canoe Island*

*Lopez Island*

Bay; 0.25 miles wide, located on the SE side of Shaw Island in the San Juan Islands.

According to the Lummi Nations, the Lummi name for Shaw Island is "Sq'ememen". The proponent would like to replace the current name of Squaw Bay with a name that honors the First People of the San Juan Islands.






# SQ'EMENEN BAY - SAN JUAN COUNTY

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Sq'emenen Bay

